

Site:	
Break:	2.1
Other:	

MAY 15 1990

9889

Mr. Bob Rogers
Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Pollution Control
P.O. Box 10385
Jackson, Mississippi 39289-0385

Re: Emergency Medical Supply Depot, Prairie, MS

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Thank you for the opportunity for Mr. Gerald Hust, Chief, Safety and Environmental Management Branch (4PMS) to meet with you and Mr. William Stewart of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on May 2, 1990, at the subject site. The on site review was very helpful to GSA.

Mr. Hust interviewed two former GSA employees who worked at the subject facility during GSA's span of ownership. As you know, the facility was operated for and under the direction of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service. The operation, including the disposal of outdated medical supplies, was performed in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The General Services Administration, under the direction of the Public Health Service, closed the facility on June 30, 1974.

The disposed medical supplies in question were IV bottles containing 5% dextrose, glucose, etc., and unidentified ampules. The electrical parts found on site were confirmed by the above referenced two employees as not part of GSA disposal activities. The outdated medical supplies which could not be burned in the adjacent burn pit were buried. Trenches were dug six feet deep and the medical supplies were pushed into the ditches by bulldozers. The bulldozer operator confirmed that he routinely ran over the supplies to crush the glass bottles and release the IV solutions. It was presumed that the ampules also were crushed. The medical supplies were then covered with dirt so that a minimum of 24 inches of soil covered the materials. These activities were directed by the Public Health Service and performed by GSA personnel.

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Following the transfer of both real property and personal property, the land was leased for farming purposes. The farming activities have removed the protective 24 inches of top soil and scattered outdated medical supplies over an approximate 6 acre area adjacent to State Highway 382. The former site employees confirm the disposal of the medical supplies was limited to six to eight ditches located between the burning pit and Highway 382. The ditches occupied less than 30% of the now affected six acres.

Also found during the on site survey, in a warehouse, were 18 wooden cases each containing 96-1/4 pound containers of ether (part of the personal property transferred). Mississippi State University personnel have used this same warehouse to store various agricultural chemicals. The university has also used some of the ether in local laboratories. Since the ether was manufactured in 1962, it is presumed to have formed peroxides and now is an explosive, sensitive to shock. The cartons are plainly marked 'Civil Defense' and were of Public Health Service origin. It is GSA's understanding the State of Mississippi, either your agency or the University, will dispose of the ether compound not at GSA expense, as the usage of the ether by State employees constitutes acceptance of the ether as non-disposed goods.

Considering the lack of a health hazard caused by the disposed of medical supplies, GSA suggests the disposal field be evaluated to identify the ditch locations. Ampules in sufficient numbers should be collected and analyzed. The University Veterinary School could perform such analysis. Upon receipt of the analysis results, determination as to remediation measures can be made. Payment for the remediation is in question. Until responsibility for the remediation can be established, GSA does not wish to begin remediation activities. Further site evaluations of the disposed medical supplies will be referred to the Public Health Service by GSA Regional Counsel.

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Please find the enclosed copy of a drawing, estimating the ditch locations. If you have questions, please contact Gerald Hust, Chief, Safety and Environmental Management Branch, on telephone (404) 331-3125.

Sincerely,

THOMAS E. DAVIS
Assistant Regional Administrator
Public Buildings Service

Attachment

CC:

4PMS-OF/RF, 4PM, 4P, 4PAC, 4F, 4L, 4A

Richard S. Kremkowski, Director
Division of Federal Employees Occupational Health,
101 Marietta St., NW, Atlanta, GA 30323

Richard Evans, Prairie Research Unit,
P.O. Box 124, Prairie, MS

William Stewart, U.S. EPA Region IV,
345 Courtland Street, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30365

Ms. Kelly McCarty, U.S. EPA Region IV ✓
345 Courtland Street, NE., Atlanta, GA 30365

4PMS:GHUST:lm:5/8/90:X 1-3125

Concurrence:

4PMS _____ Date _____ 4PM _____ Date _____

4L _____ Date _____